IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please consider the following amended paragraphs.

Paragraph beginning on page 2, line 32 to page 3, line 6:

The disadvantages heretofore associated with the prior art are overcome by the present invention of a method ~~andapparatus~~ and apparatus for reducing latency wherein a plurality of content streams defined by a playlist are sequentially provided to a subscriber in a substantially seamless manner and wherein the playlist is updated and otherwise maintained in response to subscriber commands and requests. It is also seen to be desirable to ensure that a plurality of user requests for content are structured as a concatenated series of video clips or other content, such that user navigation of the concatenated content is enabled.

Paragraph beginning on page 4, line 33 to page 5, line 8:

The servers 125 are used to store content such as movies, television programs and other information offerings of the interactive information distribution system 100 of FIG. 1. Additionally, the servers 125 are used to store assets such as bit map imagery, graphic overlay, control scripts and the like. The assets may comprise, for example, navigation assets that are used by a set top terminal to interactively navigate, and select for viewing, the offerings or content available from the service provider equipment 102. The servers 125, in response to a control signal SC produced by the session controller 145, provide content and/or asset data to the transport processor 150.

Paragraph beginning on page 5, line 9 to line 18:

The server controller 108 interacts with the at least one server 125 (e.g., a disk drive array) that generally stores the subscriber information (e.g., video data) that will be recalled and downloaded to the subscriber. The server controller 108 communicates with the at least one server via server control path (SC'). Optionally, a plurality of servers 125₁ - 125ₘ, where m is an integer greater than zero, may interact with the information server 108. The server controller 108 controls the access of information,

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such as video information, from the servers 125 and the providing (via the transport processor ~~15~~ 150) of the accessed information to a set top terminal of a subscriber requesting the information. Information requests are handled by the session controller 145 and communicated to the server controller 108.

Paragraph beginning on page 5, line 19 to line 24:

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The server controller 108 is coupled to the session controller 145 via data path SC. The server controller 108 includes a playlist ~~110-PL~~ 111 that is used to store a list of content requested by each respective subscriber. Optionally, the playlist may be stored in the session controller 145 as playlist ~~145-PL~~ 111-SC. The operation of the playlist will be described in more detail below with respect to FIG. 2.

Paragraph beginning on page 5, line 25 to line 30:

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The server controller 108 is coupled to the session ~~controller~~ controller via data path SC, synchronization clock path 118 and control path 120. The server controller 108 sends a request to the servers 125 via path SC', and provides data streams on data path 116 ~~and a synchronization clock on path 118~~ in response to requests for information from the session controller on path 120. The data streams are retrieved by the servers 125 from the data storage unit ~~114-1.~~ 114 and sent to the transport processor 150 via paths 116.

Paragraph beginning on page 6, line 11 to line 21:

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The session controller 145 ~~(or session controller)~~ provides session control of the information flowing to and from the servers 125, and may be generally described as a system providing or controlling communications between, for example, a cable system head-end and one or more set top terminals. The session controller 145 includes a session manager 122, and produces the storage control signal SC for controlling and communicating with the servers 125, and a transport processor control signal TPC for controlling and communicating with the transport processor 150. In response to a user request for particular content, the session controller 145 causes the requested content

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cont'd.*

file and any associated assets to be streamed from the appropriate server 125 to the

transport processor 150.

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Paragraph beginning on page 6, line 22 to page 7, line 2:

The session controller 145 sends data, such as commands, encryption keys and

the like, to set top terminals 106 via a forward data channel (FDC). The session

controller 145 receives data, such as information stream requests and session initiation

data (set top identification, capability and the like) via a reverse data channel (RDC).

The FDC and RDC are supported by the distribution network 104 and comprise

relatively low bandwidth data channels, such as one-two megabits per second data

channels utilizing QPSK, QAM, or other modulation techniques. The FDC and RDC are

also known as "out-of-band" channels, while the relatively high bandwidth forward

application transport channel (FATC) is also known as an "in-band" channel. The

session controller 145 contains an interface device for sending control information via

the forward data channel FDC and receiving control information and request information

via the reverse data channel RDC using the so-called "out-of-band" carrier frequencies.

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Paragraph beginning on page 8, line 33 to page 9, line 7:

Each content stream identified in the playlist has associated with it at least a

storage location parameter indicative of the server 125 including the content stream.

Additionally, the playlist may identify auxiliary information streams, such as fast forward

(FF) and rewind (REW) content streams. Upon reaching the end (i.e., terminating) of a

presently provided content stream (i.e., a stream being coupled to a subscriber via the

FATC), the server controller 108 immediately accesses (from one of the storage units

associated with the servers 125)~~114)~~ the next content stream and begins streaming the

accessed content stream to the subscriber.

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Paragraph beginning on page 11, line 3 to line 8:

It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the playlist or play queue 111

may be located in the session ~~manager 122~~ controller 145 itself, or any functional

element in communication with the session ~~manager 122~~ controller 145 such that the session ~~manager 122~~ controller 145 may update and/or maintain a playlist or play queue 111 for some or all of the subscribers within the information distribution system 100.

Paragraph beginning on page 11, line 25 to page 12, line 3:

At step 220 the session manager 122 waits for a command from the STT or termination notification from the server controller 108. Upon receiving a command from the STT, the method 200 proceeds to step 225. Upon receiving a termination notification from the server controller 108, the method 200 proceeds to step 275. A termination notification is produced by the server controller 108 to indicate that a presently streamed, or "active" content stream is almost finished streaming. That is, the portion of the active content stream not yet provided to the STT is below a temporal or other threshold level (i.e., a predefined amount of time or data not yet provided). As such, to ensure a smooth transition to the next content stream, the server ~~control~~ controller 108 must be provided with information identifying the location and other parameters associated with the next content stream to be provided.

Paragraph beginning on page 12, line 4 to line 10:

At step 275, the session manager 122 examines the playlist 111SC (or playlist 111 if located at the server controller 108), and identifies the next content stream to be provided to the STT. At step 280 the identified next content stream to be provided to the STT is communicated to the server controller 108, such that the server controller 108 may transition between the present (active) content stream and the next content stream. The method 200 then proceeds to step 220, to wait for the next command or termination notification.

Paragraph beginning on page 14, line 12 to line 20:

The method 300 of FIG. 3 is initiated at steps 312 and 321, where a session is established between a subscriber terminal and the session controller 145. That is, at

step 312, a set top terminal 136 operates to establish a session with the session controller 145 and submit any new content requests. At step 321, the session controller 145 operates to establish a session with the set top terminal. The method 300 then proceeds to step 322, where the session controller 145 accesses the play list associated with the set top terminal requesting a session at step 312. The method 300 then proceeds to step 323.

Paragraph beginning on page 14, line 28 to line 31:

At step 331, the server controller 108 responds to the stream request of step 323 by <u>initializing a command to server 125 to begin</u> streaming the play track of the first content stream associated with the requesting subscriber. The method 300 then proceeds to step 332.

Paragraph beginning on page 15, line 14 to line 19:

At step 324, the session controller 145 accesses the play list to determine the next content stream to be provided to the requesting set top terminal. The session controller 145 also transmits a request to the server controller 108 to <u>initialize a command to a server 125 to</u> begin streaming the determined content stream upon termination of the present content stream. The method 300 then proceeds to step 334.

Paragraph beginning on page 17, line 6 to line 14:

At step 318, a skip forward or back request is transmitted by the set top terminal 136 to the session controller 145. ~~Then~~ <u>The</u> method 300 then proceeds to step 327. At step 327 the session controller <u>145</u> responsively increments or decrements a play list pointer in response to the skip forward and skip back command. The method 300 then proceeds to step 328, where the session controller 145 sends a request to the server controller 108 indicating that the next or previous content within the play list associated with the requesting set top terminal should be played. The method 300 then proceeds to step 337.